

CLAIMS

1. Computer apparatus having:
- 5 i) one or more data processors;
- ii) persistent storage means connectable to said one or more data processors, said persistent storage means storing a plurality of data items, one or more of said data items containing reference(s) to one or more other data items;
- 10 ii) volatile memory means, connectable to said one or more data processors, for storing one or more of said data items;
- iii) database management system software executable by said one or more data processors to respond to a query by passing data items meeting one or more criteria specified in said query from said persistent storage means to said volatile memory means;
- 15 iv) querying code executable by said one or more data processors to pass a query to said database management system software;
- 20 v) pre-fetching code executable by said one or more data processors to:
- a) analyse response data items provided in response to said query to find related data items related to said response data items; and
- 25 b) automatically generate another query for said related data items.
2. Computer apparatus according to claim 1 wherein each of said data items contains metadata about a media file, said metadata including said reference(s), each of which reference(s) refers, directly or indirectly, to a related metadata data item whose metadata is about a media file whose content is semantically-related to the content of the first media file.
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3. Computer apparatus according to claim 1 or 2 comprising a client computer and a server computer, each having at least one of said processors, said server computer
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having control over said persistent memory and said client computer having control over said volatile memory.

4. Computer apparatus according to claim 3 wherein said data items are transferred
5 in the form of pages of memory.

5. Computer apparatus according to claim 3 or 4 in which said server computer resolves said query and sends the selected data items to said client computer.

10 6. Computer apparatus according to claim 3 or 4 in which said server computer sends said data items to said client computer and said client computer resolves said query.

7. Computer apparatus according to any preceding claim wherein said data items
15 are software objects.

8. A method of operating computer apparatus comprising a processor and first and second data stores accessible to said processor, access by said processor to data held in said first store being quicker than access to said second store, said method comprising
20 the steps of:

storing a plurality of data items in said second data store, together with relationship data indicating relationships between said data items; and

25 executing a process on said processor to:

i) fetch one or more data items from said second store together with relationship data indicating one or more related data items semantically related to said fetched data item;

30 ii) responsive to receipt of said relationship data, fetch one or more of said semantically related data items from said second memory to said first memory; and

iii) check, on subsequent requests for a data item, whether said requested data item is present in said first store and read said data item from said first store if found.

9. A method according to claim 8 in which said data items comprise an identifier of a media file and metadata representing what is portrayed by said identified media file.

10. A method according to claim 8 in which said second store holds a database.